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Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-06 AID-01 /034 W
----------011959 040305Z /64
R 031656Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5189

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 07498

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, SP, US
SUBJECT: SENATOR BYRD'S MEETING WITH GUTIERREZ MELLADO

1. MEETING WITH FIRST VICE PRESIDENT AND DEFENSE MINISTER GUTIERREZ MELLADO JULY 1, SENATOR BYRD EXPRESSED THE SUPPORT AND ADMIRATION OF THE US GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE FOR THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN, AS WELL AS ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR SPAIN'S LEADERS AND THE COURAGE AND STATESMANSHIP THEY ARE SHOWING IN MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS. HE WOULD CONVEY TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND TO HIS COLLEAGUES, HE SAID, HIS CONVICTION THAT SPAIN IS WESTERN-ORIENTED, FRIENDLY TO THE US AND TO WESTERN IDEALS, AND HAS AN IMPORTANT ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE. HE WOULD TELL THE PRESIDENT, HE SAID, THAT WE SHOULD SEE SPAIN AS A NEW AND IMPORTANT COUNTRY, AND THAT WE SHOULD PROVIDE IT THE FULLEST SUPPORT POSSIBLE.

2. GUTIERREZ MELLADO WELCOMED SENATOR BYRD AND HIS MESSAGE, AND SAID HIS VIEWS MATCHED THOSE OF THE SENATOR: SPAIN HAS BEEN A GOOD FRIEND OF THE US FOR MANY YEARS, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE DEFENSE AGREEMENTS BEGAN IN 1953, BUT THERE EXISTED THE POSSIBLE COMPLAINT THAT THE US CONGRESS HAD NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD HOW GOOD A FRIEND SPAIN HAS BEEN. THE TWO COUNTRIES CAN COMPLEMENT EACH
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OTHER IN PURSUING COMMON OBJECTIVES, HE WENT ON, AND REGARDING THE TREATY, THE MAXIMUM MUST BE EXTRACTED FROM IT. GIVEN SPAIN'S STRATEGIC LOCATION, IT IS USEFUL FOR SPAIN TO BE AS STRONG AS POSSIBLE, DRAWING ON COOPERATION TOWARD COMMON GOALS OF PEACE AND INDEPENDENCE. HE HIMSELF IS A GREAT FRIEND OF THE US, HE SAID, WHILE HE MUST OF COURSE WORK WITHIN THE POLICY OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

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3. SENATOR BYRD SAID WE RECOGNIZE THERE MUST BE A BALANCE OF RESPONSIBILITIES: THERE ARE MATTERS THAT NEED ATTENTION, AND WE ARE WORKING ON THEM. THE OVERALL COMMITMENT OF THE US TO THE DEFENSE OF WESTERN EUROPE IS WELL KNOWN, AND IS SHARED BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS. THIS PROTECTS SPAIN AS WELL AS WESTERN EUROPE. THERE IS A GROWING PERCEPTION WITHIN THE US CONGRESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SPAIN IN THE SCHEME OF WESTERN SECURITY, HE SAID. WHILE THERE MAY BE DIFFERENCES FROM TIME TO TIME REGARDING THE TREATY, SPAIN SHOULD KNOW OF THE FIRMNESS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE US DEFENSE COMMITMENT -- WHICH DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULD NOT CQNTINUE TO TRY TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES REGARDING THE TREATY.

4. PRAISING PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, GUTIERREZ MELLADO EXPRESSED AWARENESS OF THE US DEFENSE, ROLE, AND INSISTED THAT SPAIN AND THE US FIND THE RIGHT, FAIR PATH FOR COOPERATION. IN THE FACE OF THE LATENT DANGER, THE COMMON ENEMY, WE MUST PREPARE IN PEACE TO PRESERVE THE PEACE. THE SPANISH PEOPLE, HE SAID, HAVE A GREAT INSTINCT FOR KNOWING WHO THEIR TRUE FRIENDS ARE, AND HE HOPED THAT IN THE FUTURE THEY WILL SEE THE US AS HAVING BEEN A TRUE FRIEND IN PEACETIME WHEN NEEDED. IF HE WERE PRESIDENT CARTER, HE SAID, HE WOULD GIVE AN ORDER TO HELP SPAIN, AND THEN CALL FOR THAT ORDER TO BE CARRIED
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OUT.

5. EXPRESSING ADMIRATION FOR GUTIERREZ MELLADO'S DETERMINATION TO PREPARE IN PEACE TO AVOID WAR, SENATOR BYRD SAID SPAIN HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY, A GREAT CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE, WHICH IF MADE WILL HELP TO MAINTAIN PEACE.

6. SENATOR BYRD HAS SEEN THIS MESSAGE. EATON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID07498
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780274-1121
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1846438
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SENATOR BYRD\'S MEETING WITH GUTIERREZ MELLADO
TAGS: PEPR, SP, US, (BYRD, ROBERT C)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/493dc06a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014